



STATE OF INDIANA  
INDIANA STATE EXCISE POLICE

302 W. Washington Street IGCS,  
Room E-114  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Corporal Travis Thickstun  
Public Information Officer  
Telephone 317-232-2469  
tthickstun@atc.in.gov  
www.in.gov/iseip

**For Immediate Release**

**Excise Officers Seize 5,339 Packages of Illegal Drugs at 10 Ind. Stores**

**JEFFERSONVILLE, Ind. (July 25)** – Indiana State Excise Police officers seized more than 5,000 packages of illegal drugs from 10 southern Indiana tobacco stores this afternoon and charged three people after a two-month investigation.

Excise officers seized 5,339 packages of synthetic drug lookalike substances made illegal by legislation authored by State Senator Jim Merritt and signed into law by Governor Mike Pence on May 7, 2013. Today's seizures are valued in excess of \$50,000.

JC's Cigarette Outlet owner Gerald Stith, 63, of Shepherdsville, Ky., was preliminarily charged with possession of a synthetic drug lookalike substance and possession with intent to deliver a synthetic drug lookalike substance after officers took 3,216 packages of synthetic drug lookalike substances from his stores.

Excise officers seized 2,114 packages of alleged synthetic drug lookalike substances at JC's Cigarette Outlet in Jeffersonville, 513 packages in Clarksville, 392 packages in Charlestown and 197 packages at in Tell City. The Clarksville store was also cited for allowing juveniles into the store.

Smokey's Tobacco Outlet owners Sheree Banet, 57, of Lanesville, Ind., and Matthew Kaiser, 48, of New Albany, Ind., were both preliminarily charged with possession of a synthetic drug lookalike substance and possession with intent to deliver a synthetic drug lookalike substance after officers took 2,123 packages of synthetic drug lookalike substances from their stores.

Excise officers seized 375 packages at Smokey's Tobacco Outlet in Corydon, 408 packages in New Salisbury, 365 in Jeffersonville, 289 in New Albany, 315 in Salem and 371 in Sellersburg.

Excise officers were assisted by prosecutors in Floyd, Clark, Washington and Perry counties.

"The substances seized today are highly addictive and dangerous," Superintendent Matt Strittmatter said. "The State Excise Police will continue to investigate assertively all complaints regarding the possession and sale of synthetic drug lookalike substances. Additionally, we will continue to collaborate with the county prosecutors to ensure public safety."

Anyone with information on stores with synthetic drugs or lookalike substances can provide an anonymous tip to the State Excise Police at 812-523-8314.

As the enforcement division of the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, the primary mission of the Indiana State Excise Police is to promote public safety by enforcing Indiana's Alcoholic Beverage Code. While excise officers have the authority to enforce any state law, they focus primarily on alcohol, tobacco and related laws.

*All criminal defendants are to be presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*